



# **PUBLIC HEALTH**

**ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND  
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# Home Care Aide Certification

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## Home Care Aide Certification

- Beginning January 7, 2012, any person hired as a long-term care worker must be certified as a home care aide.
- Employers of long-term care workers will need to assure all new hires either obtain a home care aide credential or are exempt from the requirement.
- The requirement to obtain a home care aide certification also applies to persons who are not working in “home care.”



## What is a Long-Term Care Worker?

- A long-term care worker includes:
  - Individual providers of home care services. An individual provider is defined as someone who is reimbursed by the state.
  - Direct care employees of home care agencies
  - All direct care workers in state licensed boarding homes and adult family homes.
  - Respite care providers
  - Community residential service providers
  - Any other direct care worker providing home or community-based services to the elderly or persons with functional disabilities or developmental disabilities.



## Who is Not a Long-Term Care Worker?

- Persons employed in a nursing home, hospital or other acute care setting
- Persons employed in residential habilitation centers
- Persons employed by hospice agencies, adult day centers, or adult day health centers
- Persons not paid by the state or by a private agency or facility licensed by the state to provide personal care services.



## What Long-Term Care Workers Are Exempt From Certification?

- Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants
- Persons who hold a similar health credential as determined by the Secretary are certified counselors or advisors; speech language pathologist assistants or audiologists; occupational therapists; and physical therapists
- A home health aide who is employed by a Medicare Certified Home Health Agency and has met the requirements of 42 CFR, Part 483.35
- Persons with a special education training and an endorsement granted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction





## Long-Term Care Workers Exempt From Certification (Cont.)

- Long-term care workers employed by supported living providers.
- An Individual Provider caring for his or her biological, step, or adoptive child or parent.
- A person hired as an Individual Provider prior to June 30, 2014 who provides 20 hours or less of care for one person in any calendar month.



## Long-Term Care Workers Exempt From Certification (Cont.)

Long Term Care Providers employed as community residential service providers are exempt from all requirements until January 1, 2016. This includes:

- Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) supported living providers with the exception of supported living providers who are also licensed as a boarding home or adult family home.





## Exempt Community Residential Service Providers (Cont.)

- DDD companion homes.
- DDD alternative living homes.
- Licensed residential homes for children.



## Long-Term Care Workers Exempt From Certification (Cont.)

- A person already employed as a long-term care worker between January 1, 2011 and January 6, 2012 who completes all of his or her training requirements in effect as of the date he or she was hired.
- If this person is hired near the end of 2011, they have 120 days to complete their training. If they do so, they will continue to be exempt.



## **Documenting That a Person is Exempt Because They Were Worked Between 1/1/11 and 1/6/12**

A person who is exempt under this provision should have proof of their exemption. They will need this proof if they choose to apply for certification. They will also need proof of their exemption if there is a complaint filed alleging they are practicing without a proper credential. Employers will also want to keep proof of the employee's exemption in their file because surveyors may also want to assure all employees are credentialed properly.



## Documenting That a Person is Exempt Because They Were Worked Between 1/1/11 and 1/6/12 (Cont.)

Documentation of this exemption should include:

- A letter or similar documentation from the employer that hired the worker on or before January 6, 2012. The letter should include:
  - First, and if applicable, last day of employment
  - Job Title
  - Job Description
- Proof of completing applicable training requirements

The employer can develop their own letter or use the form that is available in the home care aide application packet.



## What Are The Requirements For Certification?

- Submit to a state and federal fingerprint background check through the DSHS. This is shared with DOH for certification purposes.
- Submit the home care aide certification application with \$60 application fee.
- Successfully complete seventy-five hours of entry level training approved by DSHS. An applicant for certification will be required to submit the DSHS 75 hour training certificate.
- Successfully pass the home care aide certification examination.



## Application process for certification – Background check

- The employer needs to first contact the Background Check Central Unit (BCCU) to request a background check.
- The employer will receive the results of the background check, along with an OCA number. The OCA number is used by the long-term care worker to apply for the fingerprint background.





## Application process for certification – Background check

- The long-term care worker must submit a Department of Health application for home care aide certification. This requires the OCA # provided by the BCCU. The DOH application will be incomplete without the OCA #. The application for certification will be available at:
- <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/HCAides/default.htm>



## Application process for certification – Candidate ID

- The Department of Health will issue a candidate number when they enter the application into the data base. Once it is assigned, it is available at:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/providercredentialsearch/SearchCriteria.aspx>



## Application process for certification – Candidate ID

- To obtain the long-term care worker's candidate number, search by individual name, entering "home care aide" in the credential type. Then enter the candidate's last and first names in the designated boxes.



## Application process for certification – Exam

- Apply for examination directly to the examination contractor, Prometric at the following web-site:  
<http://www.prometric.com/WADOH/Default.htm>
- The candidate must include the DOH candidate number on the examination application. Otherwise, the application is incomplete and all application materials will be returned to the candidate.



## Home Care Aide Examination

- The examination application, examination fee and DSHS 75 hour training certificate of completion must be submitted directly to Prometric. This is in addition to submitting the certification application, certification fee and DSHS 75 hour training certificate to the Department of Health.
- The fee for examination is \$115 for both parts of the examination. An oral examination is available for an extra \$10.
- The examination application will require a DOH candidate number.



## Home Care Aide Exam (Continued)

- Persons who fail only one part of the examination (written/oral or skills) will be required to retake only that portion of the examination.
- The candidate who fails only one portion of the examination will pay to retake only that portion of the examination.





## Home Care Aide Exam (cont.)

- An applicant must successfully pass the examination in three tries or retake the training.
- The examination must be successfully completed within two years of the date training was completed or the applicant must re-take the training.
- An application for re-examination can be submitted any time after the applicant receives notice of not passing the examination



## Home Care Aide Exam (cont.)

- The Home Care Aide Examination is offered in the following languages:
- Korean
- Russian
- Simplified Chinese (written)/Cantonese (skills)
- Spanish
- Vietnamese



# Home Care Aide Exam Development

- An examination vendor was chosen according to a “Request For Proposal” (RFP).
- The RFP had various requirements that needed to be met by the potential examination contractor.
- DOH Contracted with Prometric to provide services required by the RFP.



## Home Care Aide Exam Development (Cont.)

- RFP requirements stated that the exam assess core competencies such as worker self care, problem solving, maintaining dignity, consumer directed care, cultural sensitivity, communication skills, fall prevention, skin and body care, supporting “Activities of Daily Living”, Food preparation/handling and long-term care worker roles/responsibilities.



## Home Care Aide Exam Development (Cont.)

- Prometric was also to establish methods to determine a passing “cut score”, administer the exam fairly and impartially in test sites state-wide and share results with the candidate and DOH
- Both a written examination and skills examination is required by law.



# Skills Exam Test Development- Theresa Dykton

- Prometric conducted:
  - Panel Job Analysis to develop Content Outline for the Written Knowledge Exam
  - Item Writing: In-person and independent
  - Item Review Sessions (approximately 17 sessions)
  - Standard Setting (“What a candidate needs to know and be able to do at a minimum to pass the examination”)
- Form Assembly
  - 3 Written Exams; 2 Oral Exams
  - Professional recording of approved items





# Skills Exam Test Development- Theresa Dykton

- Prometric drafted evaluation criteria for skills identified in the core competencies
- Met with WA State subject matter experts (SMEs) May 12-13, 2010
  - Reviewed candidate instructions: general and skills specific
  - Reviewed skills and evaluation criteria
  - Finalized skills to be included in the skills exam
  - Designated domains for each skill and rated relative difficulty of skills within domains for form construction
  - Completed criticality rating for evaluation criteria (used to establish weights)



# Exam Assembly

## Theresa Dykton, Prometric

1. Each skills exam consists of 5 scored skills: 3 prompted, 2 unprompted (hand washing and common care practice)
2. Each prompted skill is grouped by an estimated level of difficulty: most, moderate, least
3. The 3 prompted skills represent one skill from each domain and 1 skill from each level of difficulty



## Can a Long-Term Care Giver Provide Care Before Obtaining the Home Care Aide Certification?

- Long-term care workers can work before certification once they complete the five hours of safety and orientation training.
- They must stop working if they have not received the home care aide certification within 150 days of the date of hire.



## Suggestions For Meeting The 150 Day Requirement

- The employer should request the background check for the worker immediately. If possible, the employer should have a secure fax to allow for a quicker turn-around.
- The Long-Term Care Worker needs to apply for certification as soon as the employer gets the OCA # from the BCCU. This is important since it can take four to six weeks to process the application.



## Suggestions For Meeting The 150 Day Requirement (Cont.)

- It is important for the long-term care worker to enter and complete training as soon as possible. Although the law allows 120 days to complete training, doing so allows only 30 days to complete the examination and obtain certification. This is a tight time-frame that may be difficult to meet.



## Suggestions For Meeting The 150 Day Requirement (Cont.)

- Employers can check the provider credential search to assure that the Department of Health application has been received. The candidate number should be in the system within two weeks from the date DOH receives the application.





## Disciplinary Action

- Home Care Aides are placed under the Uniform Disciplinary Act. An application can be denied based on unprofessional conduct (including conviction data.) The Department can also take action on a certification based on unprofessional conduct.



## Nurse Delegation

- Nurse delegation cannot be performed under the Home Care Aide Certification.
- Long-term care workers who want to perform nurse delegation must either:
  - Have a NA-C credential; or
  - Have both a Home Care Aide and NA-R credential (or just the NA-R credential for the first 150 days from the date of hire.)



## Resources

Department of Health Web-Site:

[www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/HCAides/default.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/HCAides/default.htm)

(Also link to list-serve from this site)

Prometric Web-Site:

[www.prometric.com/wadoh](http://www.prometric.com/wadoh)

Department of Social and Health Services Web-Site:

<http://www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov/professional/training/1163>

DOH Home Care Aides E-Mail:

[Homecare aides@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Homecare aides@doh.wa.gov)

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# Questions?